## Claims:

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- A method of treating viral infections in a patient which method comprises co-administering to said patient a therapeutically effective amount of interferon and a low dose of ribavirin.
- 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the ribavirin is administered orally and at a dose delivery rate sufficient to provide a clinically effective blood level in the portal vein and less than required to provide a clinically effective blood level in the peripheral circulation to thereby provide a dose-delivery rate having a selective antiviral and interferon potentiating effect in the liver.
- A method according to claim 1, wherein the low-dose of ribavirin is administered in a slow-release formulation to provide a clinically effective blood level in the portal vein and less than required to provide a clinically effective blood level in the peripheral circulation.
  - 4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the formulation of ribavirin is a controlled-release formulation.

- 5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the controlled-release formulation releases ribavirin by a mechanism chosen from diffusion and erosion.
- 25 6. The method according to claim 4, wherein the controlled-release formulation of ribavirin comprises at least one of polymer-coated multiparticulates, polymer-coated tablets, polymer-coated minitablets, and hydrophilic matrix tablets.
- The method according to claim 1, wherein the ribavirin dose is less than 400 mg/day.
  - 8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the ribavirin dose is in the range of from 5 to 399 mg/day.

- 9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the ribavirin dose is in the range of from 20 to 350 mg/day.
- 5 10. A method according to claim 1, wherein the ribavirin dose is varied according to the body weight of the patient.
  - 11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the ribavirin dose is less than 6 mg/kg/day.
  - 12: A method according to claim 11, wherein the ribavirin dose is less than 5 mg/kg/day.
- 13. A method according to claim 12, wherein the ribavirin dose is in the range of from 1 to 5 mg/kg/day.
  - 14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the viral infection is hepatitis C.
- 20 15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the ribavirin is in the form of at least one of a ribavirin ester, salt, or analogue of ribavirin shown to be effective as an antiviral agent.
- 16. The method according to claim 15, wherein the interferon is interferon25 alfa or pegylated interferon alfa.
  - 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the interferon is interferon alfa 2b.
- 18. The method according to claim 17, wherein the interferon is administered30 parenterally.
  - 19. The method according to claim 18, wherein the interferon is administered by subcutaneous IV or IM injection.

- 20. The method according to claim 19, wherein the interferon is administered parenterally in an amount of from 2 to 10 million IU per week on a weekly, thrice weekly ("TIW"), every other day ("QOD") or daily basis.
- 5 21. The method according to claim 16, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa is pegylated interferon alfa-2b and is administered systemically in an amount of 0.5 to 2.0 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per week on a weekly, TIW, QOD or daily basis.
- 10 22. The method according to claim 16, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa is pegylated interferon alfa-2a and is administered systemically in an amount of 20 to 250 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per week on a weekly, TIW, QOD or daily basis.
- 15 23. A method of treating viral infections in a patient which method comprises co-administering to said patient a therapeutically effective amount of interferon with ribavirin which is administered as a slow release formulation.
- 24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the dose of the ribavirin used20 is in the range of from 5 to 800 mg/day.
  - 25. The method according to claim 24, wherein the ribavirin dose is in the range of from 400 to 800 mg/day.
- 25 26. The method according to claim 24, wherein the ribavirin dose is less than 400 mg/day.
  - 27. The method according to claim 26, wherein the ribavirin dose is in the range of from 5 to 399 mg/day.
  - 28. A method of treating viral infections in a patient which method comprises co-administering to said patient a therapeutically effective amount of interferon with a low dose of ribavirin as a slow release formulation.

- 29. A method according to claim 28 further comprising an antioxidant or other membrane protective agent which is administered in systemic doses.
- 30. A method according to claim 28 further comprising an antioxidant or
  other membrane protective agent which is administered as a low-dose, slow-release formulation.
- 31. A method according to claim 28, further comprising an antioxidant or other membrane protective agent which is co-formulated with the ribavirin as a
  10 low-dose, slow-release formulation.
  - 32. A use of a therapeutically effective amount of interferon with a low dose of ribavirin and optionally an antioxidant or other membrane protective agent in the preparation of a medicament to treat viral infections in a patient.

33. A kit for use in the treatment of viral infections comprising a therapeutically effective amount of interferon in combination with ribavirin and optionally an antioxidant or other membrane protective agent as a slow-release formulation.

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- 34. At kit according to claim 33 wherein the kit comprises unit doses of ribavirin providing a dose delivery rate sufficient to provide a clinically effective blood level in the portal vein and less than required to provide a clinically effective blood level in the peripheral circulation to thereby provide a dose-delivery rate having a selective antiviral and interferon potentiating effect in the liver.
- 35. A kit according to claim 33 wherein the low-dose of ribavirin is administered in a slow-release formulation to provide a clinically effective blood level in the portal vein and less than required to provide a clinically effective blood level in the peripheral circulation.

- 36. A kit according to claim 35 wherein the slow-release formulation of ribavirin comprises at least one of polymer-coated multiparticulates, polymer-coated tablets, polymer-coated minitablets, and hydrophilic matrix tablets.
- 5 37. A kit according to claim 35 wherein the unit dose of ribavirin is less than 400 mg/day.
  - 38. A kit according to claim 35 wherein the unit dose of ribavirin is less than 6 mg/kg/day.
  - 39. A kit according to claim 33 wherein the ribavirin is in the form of at least one of a ribavirin ester, salt or analogue or ribavirin shown to be effective as an antiviral agent.
- 40. A kit according to claim 33 wherein the interferon is in a form for parenteral administration.
- 41. A kit according to claim 33 comprising unit doses of interferon for providing an amount of from 2 to 10 million IU per week by thrice weekly20 ("TIW"), every other day ("QOD") or daily administration.
  - 42. A kit according to claim 33 wherein the interferon is interferon alfa or pegylated interferon alfa.
- 43. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of viral infections in a patient comprising a therapeutically effective amount of interferon together with a low dose of ribavirin and optionally an antioxidant or other membrane protective agent.